

I'm Sad

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[0 : 00] We are starting in on a new book of the Bible, the book of Nehemiah. It is a fantastically wonderful book of the Bible. I hope you enjoyed the book of Ezra.

Ezra was the man sent by God to build the temple. And so he and his whole crew got there before him, and then he shows up, and they are at work building the temple.

And there were just great lessons there. Well, in the restoration of the city of Jerusalem, another man is key to that, and his name is Nehemiah. And Nehemiah's job is going to be to go there and to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem.

He is going to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem, the protection around Jerusalem. And the story starts off in Nehemiah chapter 1, and we'll read a lot of scripture this morning. But in Nehemiah chapter 1, we find Nehemiah, and he is a cupbearer.

He is the man that stands next to the king. He's like the taster of the food. He's like the personal attendant of the king. And in the king's presence, it is extremely bad to ever not be happy.

[1 : 11] I don't know if it's the way it is at your house, but when I walk in the door, I can tell if Betty's happy or sad. I don't know what happens. I don't know what the pheromones, hormones, or aromas, or what happens.

But I can walk in the house and go, whoa, she's not in a good mood today. She doesn't even have to say a word. I mean, I open the door, and I'm like, whoa, I feel it. And so the kings were like, we don't want to have to put up with that kind of junk. So when you're around me, you better be in a good mood.

If you weren't in a good mood, you could lose your head. And Nehemiah's a Jew, and he's been gone from his hometown. And he really doesn't even know his hometown, but he's thinking about it. He's a Jew. He's remembering Jerusalem, and his brother comes to see him.

And he's talking to his brother in his off-duty hours, and his brother says to him, you wouldn't believe the city of Jerusalem, our birthplace, our family's birthplace, our heritage.

It's all destroyed, and it's all in bad shape, and it's just horrible what's going on back in Jerusalem. And Nehemiah listens to the entire story.

[2 : 13] He asks question after question. And so the next day when he's on duty, and he's with the king with all these big shots, and he's in the palace, he's not got the happiest face on like he's always had before, like he's supposed to have.

And while he's standing there, one day the king looks at him and says, are you sad in my presence? And Nehemiah looks at him and says, I'm sorry. How can I not be sad?

When my hometown, when my city, when the place of my God and my people is so destroyed. But before he ever did that, he was like, oh boy, he just asked me if I'm sad.

So he shot what Wayne Cofield used to be my pastor. He used to call them flare prayers. It's one of them prayers when you're really in real trouble and you ain't got time for real prayer. You just go, and shoot the flare up. He said, God, help me.

He's about to ask me. And so he prayed that prayer, and he asked God to help him. And instead of getting mad, the king goes, well, maybe we ought to do something about that.

- [3 : 15] Maybe we ought to fix that city. And he ends up the day with God having just worked everything out, because just like in the book of Ezra, God's sweet hand was on him.
- So I want to walk you through that. Now, let me just tell you, there's a definite parallel. You're going to be thinking, well, I really don't care what happened to the city of Jerusalem way over 2,000 years ago, and I don't care about a cupbearer.
- We don't even have cupbearers anymore. And I don't know. I mean, I don't care anything about that. It's a picture of how a man of God ought to feel about his people.
- It's a picture of how a man of God ought to feel about world conditions. It's a picture of how you, as a dad and a family of the granddad and a family of the leader of a family, ought to be brokenhearted over sin and what sin does.
- And so there's a definite application. It works in my life. It works in your life. It shows us the attitudes that we ought to have. So if you'll take your Bible and go with me to Nehemiah chapter 1.
- [4 : 15] Nehemiah chapter 1. I am going to take you right down to verse 3. I'll go ahead and read 1 and 2, and then we'll get to 3. The words of Nehemiah, the son of that guy, and it came to pass in the month of Chesilu in the 20th year as I was in Shushan the palace, that Hanani, one of my brothers, came.
- He and other guys that had been from Judah, and I asked them concerning the Jews that escaped, which were left of the captivity, concerning Jerusalem.
- Now, you understand, so you've got to get kind of a background picture. The nation of Israel had been conquered by these foreign countries, Babylon, and it's a captivity that's going to run 70 years because sin always has consequences.
- When you do wrong, it doesn't mean God doesn't love you, but it has consequences. It's kind of like when you tell your child, don't stick the paper clip in the plug-in, in the wall.
- And your kid's like, if you loved me, you'd let me do that. You're like, well, if you do that, there will be consequences. And you slap their little hand in it when you're not looking, they're like, I don't need daddy's permission.
- [5 : 22] I can stick it in there with nobody watching. And he goes over there, and all of a sudden, you hear him howling and yelling. His two little fingers are burnt, and he's laying 25 feet across the side of the room. And you walk in and say, I warned you, there are always consequences to sin.
- Amen. And so they had, on purpose, as a nation, ignored what God taught them. This wasn't an individual. It was a national. And as a nation, they had ignored God's laws for 490 years.
- And so one day, God comes along and charges them what they owe him, which is 70 years. They were supposed to give him one year out of every seven, and they didn't do that. And so he takes them into captivity.
- And there were some that had not been taken into captivity, some that escaped, some that were still living back home. And so when he saw them, he's like, the guys that didn't get taken and didn't get put in slavery like I am, how are things going?
- I would like to know. And so he asked them concerning Jerusalem, if you would. So the first thing I want you to know is this. Why is Nehemiah sad in the story?
- [6 : 25] So look at Nehemiah chapter 1 and verse 3. This is what his brother and the other guys say. They're going to explain the conditions of the city. And they said unto me, the remnant, and whenever you see this word remnant, it's not like a big word, but if you, my wife used to sew.
- You know, do y'all know that clothes don't come put together? Did you know they make big bolts of cloth, and somebody has to cut it and stick it together and then sew it?

Did y'all, how many of y'all knew that? Say amen. Nate, I know you had absolutely no idea, did you? Nate's like, I thought it grew on trees. And so when you have something, when you get through cutting out the fluff and there's a piece of cloth left over, that's a remnant.

So it's not something weird. It's just leftovers. It's just the extra. It's just the part. And so there was a remnant. There was a small part of the nation of Israel that was left of the captivity.

Not everybody had been taken away. They're in the province and they were in, underline in your Bible, great affliction. Underline that. Great affliction and reproach. They were hurting.

[7 : 29] They were suffering. They didn't have enough to eat. They didn't have enough to drink. They didn't have all the things that should have been there. And reproach. They were embarrassed. It was shameful.

They had once been a great kingdom. The city of Jerusalem had been at one time like Washington, D.C. Like at one time London or Tokyo, Berlin, a great world capital.

Jerusalem had been like big time. I happen to be reading right now some history of the United States. And they just invaded and burned the White House.

And they are coming up in New Orleans. Now the British are coming back to take over. And our people, our president had to run and hide. That's a reproach. And the last thing that's going to ever happen with that, we're like, bless God, you touch the White House.

You touch the president. You touch our. You don't do that to our country. That's what they would have said when David was king. But now it's broken.

[8 : 34] Look at the verse. It says in the verses, it says, The wall, the protection, the defense of Jerusalem is broken down. It's not just broken down.

They've even burned the gates with fire. Not only that, it says in chapter 2 and verse 3 that the place lay in ruins. It was bombed out.

It was a shell. Back in that day, the White House was now the black house from all the soot and all the burning that had gone on around it. The Bible says in Nehemiah chapter 2 and verse 3, And they said unto the king, Let the king live forever.

Why shouldn't I have a sad face? Why should not my countenance be sad? When the city, the place of my father's graveyard, the place of our father's sepulchers, are wasted, destroyed, lies waste.

And the gates are consumed with fire. How can I be anything less than sad? Chapter 2 and verse 17, I said unto them, You see the distress that we are in?

[9 : 41] How Jerusalem is wasted, lies waste, and the gates are burned with fire. Come, let us build up the wall of Jerusalem so people quit mocking us.

They quit laughing at us. The character of God had been disgraced. You see, the way things are viewed today, maybe our political issues, but in Bible days, every country rose or fell by the power of its God.

That's why when Dagon, who was the God of the Philistines, when they took Dagon, or when, excuse me, when Dagon, when they took the Ark of the Covenant, which is where the symbol of the God of Israel was, and they moved it into Dagon's headquarters, into his worship room, and the next day, Dagon, boom, fell on his face.

Because God was saying, No, no God stands above me. So they set him back up, and he fell down again, and there was nothing left of him but a stump. And so when any country won, it would be like, Praise to Dagon!

Praise to Dagon! Bad on the God of Israel! And so whenever Jerusalem is destroyed, it's not the American people, it's not the White House, it's the God of the country.

[10 : 55] And so Nehemiah says, My country's destroyed. My God's embarrassed. The world's mocking. My God, nobody believes him. Nobody approves of him.

The city of our God lays in ruin. And no one cares. Do you understand that when you sin, the real issue, the real thing that's hard is you hurt the name of Jesus?

To be blunt and honest with you, that little case of fornication, or that little case of pornography, or that little case of wrath, and hatred, and bitterness, or whatever, and all that, you have a testimony.

And that testimony is, I serve the great God of heaven. When we use, we fly a flag every day of our lives if we're born again. It says, I belong to Jesus.

We even tell people, I am a Christian, which means I am a Christ follower. We tell people, I'm a Christian. I represent Jesus. And so when the devil causes one of us to fall in sin, when the devil causes one of us to do wrong, the name of our God is blasphemed.

[12 : 02] When David sinned with Bathsheba, do you know what the prophet said? You have given the enemies of God a reason to blaspheme. You have given the people who don't believe in our God a reason to blaspheme.

Nehemiah, why are you sad? Because my God's being mocked. Because the city of my God, the walls around the city of my God, everybody's thinking my God is no good God.

Is it not a powerful God? And it's breaking my heart. We ought to be brokenhearted. We look in our family and we see sin. We look in our country and we see sin.

We look around the world and we see sin. And to be blunt, honest, we don't see the name of our God lifted high above a lost world. We don't see the name of our God lifted high above Alpharetta. We don't see the name of our God lifted high above Floyd County, Forsyth County, Cobb County, Cherokee County.

We don't see the name of God lifted high. It ought to break our hearts. If you agree with that, say amen. So what's the man of God do in the story? Look with me if you would at Nehemiah chapter 1 and verse 6.

[13 : 14] Nehemiah chapter 1 and verse 6. He repents. The godly man repents. Here's what you do. Well, it ain't my fault. It ain't my fault. I'm not the one doing wrong.

But Nehemiah, it's not even there. Look what he says. Nehemiah 1, 6. Let thine ear now be attentive. God, open your ear and listen. Let your eyes be open that you may hear the prayer of your servant.

God, I'm coming to you praying. Open your ears, open your eyes, and listen. I pray thee now, day and night. This is bothering me enough. I'm praying day and night for the children of Israel, thy servants.

And I am confessing the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee. Both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee.

We have not kept your commandments, nor your statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandest, thy servant. I am sorry. Nehemiah is not the president.

[14 : 17] Nehemiah is not a senator or a congressman. Nehemiah is not a governor. Nehemiah is not even a mayor. Nehemiah is a slave who simply holds the cup for the king to drink out of.

Nehemiah is a peon nobody. But when he sees sin running rampant and the name of God in the floor and people mocking the name of God, Nehemiah is, oh God, please forgive us.

My people, they haven't obeyed you. My nation hasn't obeyed you. The church hasn't obeyed you. God, we need you. He took it personally.

Go with me to Nehemiah chapter one and verse two. This is just interesting if you want to write it down in the Margin of the Bible. In chapter one and two, he uses the word I 36 times. And he uses the word me 18 times.

So 54 times, he takes personal responsibility. Do you know why churches don't stand up and walk and do what they ought to do? Because they're not doing their job. And I never think about me.

[15 : 25] If you said, Nehemiah, how's the church going? Nehemiah said, I'm not doing what I'll do. I'm not doing what I'll do. We're not doing what I'll do. No, me. It's on me. Nehemiah wouldn't have been going.

It's them deacons. It's them Sunday school teachers. It's the people that work in the sound booth. It's them people working the nursery. It's that pastor. Nehemiah would have been like, I might be just a cupbearer, but I feel like it's my responsibility.

Look, if you would, at Nehemiah chapter one and verse two. He felt like it was his personal responsibility to find out what needed to be done. He said, I asked them concerning the Jews.

I mean, who is Nehemiah to ask? Where's the high priest? Where's the deacon? Where's the Levite? Nehemiah's the cupbearer. Nehemiah said, I need to know. I need to know what needs to be done.

I am personally invested. I am personally interested. I personally care. I want to see God's name lifted high. So I ask. Then he said, I know I need to ask.

[16 : 23] I need to pray. He didn't call on everybody else in the church to pray. Look at Nehemiah chapter one and verse four. He says, when it came to pass, I heard these words. I sat down and I wept and I mourned and I fasted and I prayed.

In verse five, I beseeched the old God of heaven. It was personal. He was like, oh God, something's got to be done. And I feel responsible.

I feel responsible. I need to pray. Verse five, I beseech thee. In verse six, he said, I pray before thee. I have sinned. I and my father, we have sinned.

It was personal to him. It was personal to him to feel the burden. He felt the burden. If you look at Nehemiah chapter two and verse one, it says it came to pass in the month Nisan in the 20th year of our taxes, the king that wine was before him and I took up the wine and he gave it to the king.

Now I had not been before sad in his presence. And that's the whole point is he's never been sad. I mean, when you're going to stand in front of the king, back in the back room, you're like, smile, practice smiling.

[17 : 30] Hey king, how you doing this morning? I got to act like I'm happy today. And this is the first time he came out and there was no skip in his step. He wasn't chipper today. He's broken hearted.

He's broken hearted because the name of his God is being blasphemed. He's broken hearted because the work of God is in ruins. He's broken hearted because of all he sees going on around him.

He's broken hearted because he personally went out and decided to do it. He's broken hearted because he feels the entire weight of the entire ministry. I'm going to keep going on this personal part for a second, but can I just say to you, we're trying to reach the world with a gospel message, but maybe you don't feel it personally.

We're trying to reach Alpharetta with the gospel, but maybe you don't take it personally. We want to see God bring revival and do a work in our church and maybe you're like, well, there's some older men in this church. I think they ought to do something.

That pastor ought to get with it. The deacons ought to get with it. The people that lead the music ought to get with it. I just hope everybody in this church really wakes up. In fact, most churches are full of people that know what a church needs to do. It's always them, not us.

[18 : 37] It's always them, not me. Almost every church is full of people that take no personal responsibility but are in the blame game. Well, if they, if they, but that's not what old Nehemiah's doing.

I mean, Nehemiah could have said, look, I was a baby when we brought here anyway. I was even born here. I wasn't even born there. It's not really my problem. But that's not how Nehemiah talks.

Nehemiah's like, I feel the burden. So then Nehemiah said, well, somebody's going to have to get some help. I think I'll do it. Look at Nehemiah chapter two and verse seven.

The king said, what are you doing sad, boy? You're my servant. You're my slave. You can't be sad in my presence. And moreover, I said to the king, well, if it please you, could you get me some letters for the governors beyond the river that they may convey me over till I come to Judah?

Well, since you ask why I'm sad, I'll tell you why I'm sad. I'm sad because the city and my God's in ruins. I'll tell you why I'm sad. How could I not be sad when my God's not, is being mocked all over the world? And since you ask, I'll just go ahead and tell you, I'd like for you to let me go and leave my post and leave my job and what I'm doing and go try to do something to make a difference.

[19 : 48] And while I'm at it, would you mind just writing me a letter that tells everybody to leave me alone and let me do my job? So he was like, I gotta ask for help. Churches are full of blamers.

Churches are full of complainers. Churches are full of people that know all the reasons things aren't right but aren't doing anything about it. Not Nehemiah. Not only did he ask for help, not only did he feel the burden, not only did he pray, but he said, can I go?

Look at Nehemiah chapter two and verse five. I said unto the king, if it pleased the king and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, hey, if you like me and I've been doing a good job, would you send me? Would you send me to the city of my father's graves that I may build it?

God, I really wanna make a difference with my life. God, I really wanna be used. To me, it's like there's always somebody that'll stand up and say, I wanna make a difference.

And that's who Nehemiah is in the story. You remember when David walked up to the crowd and Goliath was screaming and cussing and making fun of God and everybody's scared to death and quivering in their boots and hiding in their tents and even the king who's a head and shoulders talking to everybody else, he's scared to death.

[21 : 08] And David walked up and he said, who gave that guy right to talk about our God like that? Nobody will be able to talk about our God like that. Somebody will just go out there and whip him right now. And they said, well, who's gonna do it?

It's you? And David said, yeah, I don't know why not. Might as well be me. His brothers started laughing at him. You little punk. All you do is take care of sheep. You don't know anything about killing giants. And David said, I know this.

He ought not be talking about my God like he is. And I don't appreciate it a bit. And the other men started laughing at him and David said, I don't care what y'all got to say. I'm fixing to take that giant's head off. They said, well, you can take him to the king.

Took him to the king. The king looked at him and said, you skinny looking little boy thing, you. You couldn't whip anybody. And David said, sir, I'll just be honest with you. It's not me.

But when I get to doing stuff, God just comes on me and he does stuff with me. I mean, I've killed a bear and I've killed a lion when they come to get my sheep. And the king said, well, if that's a big deal, put on my armor. He puts on the armor, dances a jig inside and says, I can't wear your armor.

[22 : 05] He said, I just have to fight with what I know how to do. And the king's like, well, just go out here and get killed if you want. A few minutes later, David walks back in, says, sets his head down on the table and says, is that the guy being caused a trouble around here? See, when you want to make a difference, you can make a difference.

When you, you know, this church can take off when you personally feel that. Our families can get right with God. You say, my brother, my sister, my aunt, my uncle aren't saved, but you're not taking it personal.

There's countries that don't have the gospel, but you're not taking it personally. There are needs all around us, but you don't take it personally. Nehemiah would have said, I don't know how y'all don't take it personally.

I'm so scared, I'm risking my life in front of my boss. Go with me, if you would, to Nehemiah chapter two and verse four. He makes his request. He makes his request. You know who he talks to first?

Not a man, but God. Because that's where it starts. In Nehemiah chapter two and verse four, the Bible said, then the king said unto me, what you want? And he said, so I prayed to the God of heaven.

[23 : 11] Now, if you want to, write the words, flare prayer, Wayne Cofield. That's what he calls that. He said, that's a flare prayer. He said, the guy looks at him and says, what do you want? And Nehemiah said, pause.

Hey, I need help. This is what I want. I still think that's a pretty good way to say it. Say amen. I mean, you know, Nehemiah was like, I ain't about to ask him nothing if he don't help.

I gotta have help and I ain't got time to fast and pray. I ain't got time to wait a week. I just gotta have you. And God's up in heaven and said, well, I just wanted you to ask. So he prayed to God.

And the whole story, he's already been praying. It wasn't like this was some kind of flippant prayer he prayed he hadn't already been working on because in Nehemiah chapter one and verse six, if you recall, he asked for forgiveness.

Look at Nehemiah chapter one and verse six. He said, God, your ears and your eyes hear the prayer. I pray before thee as I confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned before thee, both I and my father's house.

[24 : 10] We have sinned. We have dealt corruptly against you. We have not kept your commandments nor your statutes nor the judgments which Moses commanded which the word of God told us. We haven't done right and I'm here to pray.

You see, if you really want to get right with God, you're going to have to do some admitting you're wrong. You know why most of us can't get right with God? Because we don't ever think we got wrong. We walk around in our pride and our arrogance like I don't need to get saved because I'm good and I don't need to get on my knees and pray because goodnight I'm the best guy everybody knows around here.

I'm not guilty. That's not how Nehemiah felt. That's not how Nehemiah felt. Chapter one and verse 11 he asked God for his favor. He said, God, I need you.

Nehemiah 1.11 he said, O Lord, I beseech thee let now thine ear be attended to the prayer of thy servant. God, pay attention to me and to the prayer that I pray and all of us who desire your name and to prosper.

God, I need some help. I need to prosper here. Pray thee, thy servant. I pray thee, thy servant this day and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. God, I'm going to be in there and he's going to ask me and I'll throw up a flare prayer right before that but flare prayers are prepared by real prayers before you pray a flare prayer.

[25 : 29] He's already been praying. He's already been praying and he asked God for favor.

Nehemiah 2.8 A letter unto Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which I pertained to the house for the wall of the city and for the house that I shall enter into.

And the king granted me, but notice what he says, the king gave me what I asked for. The king gave me what I asked for but it was because God touched him to make him do it.

Nehemiah wasn't like, watch this, I am such a good cupbearer, I've been serving him the best food and the best wine and been taking such good care of him, he's just going to be nice to me because I'm just a good guy.

Nope. Nehemiah said, I'll tell you why he answered my prayer. You need to mark that in your verse. Nehemiah 2.8 Underline this, according to the good hand of my God on me.

So Nehemiah's over here, he's like, God, I love you, I serve you, I look for you. God, I want to do something about the nation of Israel, I want to help Jerusalem, I want to get the wall built around there. Oh God, forgive my people, forgive Israel, forgive Vision Baptist Church for not caring about you, forgive us for breaking your rules, forgive us for flippantly taking our Sunday school classes, forgive us for not praying, forgive us for not giving, oh God, forgive us please, I've got to have help.

[26 : 47] And God, in a while, I'll stand before that king and I'm going to ask him for a favor, I need you. God, please. I've been wrong, I'm sorry, God, please.

Please bless me. Hey king, by the way, is there any way you could, hey God, I'm asking now, I told you about that a while ago. Hey king, what about it? And the king said, you can have it and Nehemiah goes, wasn't me, it was him.

Amen, it wasn't me, it was him. Nehemiah chapter two in verse 18, I told them, even when he walked out and told people, he didn't go out and say, I am the king's cupbearer, I am a person of importance.

When Nehemiah told the other Jews, he said this, I told them it was God. Look at the verse 18, I told them of the hand of my God, which was upon me, it's God.

Then he makes a request to man. In Nehemiah chapter two and verse five, I said unto the king, if it pleased the king and if I found favor, would you send me that I may build?

[27 : 50] And it pleased the king, next verse, and I told him when I'd come back, I'd go get the job done. So, do you see the need? Is your mother saved?

Is your aunt saved? Is your cousin saved? Are your children saved? Are your friends saved? Are the people you worked with saved? Do you care? Does it break your heart that they don't know Jesus and they need to know him?

Does it bother you that the neighbors that live around you or the city we live in or the country we live in or countries across the sea need the gospel? Does it bother you? It does. We go to God in prayer and we say, God use me and we give our lives and we let God do something.

And it's amazing how God opens doors when you really get over here and confess your sin and when you risk your life and say, I'm going to do what God wants me to do. It's amazing how God stands up and does stuff.

Look at Nehemiah chapter 2 and verse 6 and see how the king responded. It pleased the king to send me. Nehemiah chapter 2 and verse 6. Underline that. It pleased the king to send me.

[29 : 00] Verse 7. If it pleased the king. You see, he knew he had to ask the king but do you know why the king is pleased? Do you know why the king is willing to let this happen? Because of God.

God's hand on him. God touching the king. Do you know how the family members you get saved are going to get saved? God's going to touch you and use you. God's going to touch them. Do you know how you can be a missionary? God's going to touch you.

It's God doing a work. We're here to worship the God of heaven for him to use us. The king's response was positive. In chapter 2 and verse 7 he said, would you give me some letters?

But the king didn't just give him letters. In chapter 2 and verse 9 he sent him soldiers. He said, well here's the letters but if people don't like my letter I'll just send an army to shoot them if they don't like my letter. He said, I didn't ask for nothing but letters.

The king said, yeah but when your God answers prayer he goes above and beyond. And so now as you march down through there people say, how do I know that letter's from the king? The soldier says, I'm here. And I'm pointing my bow and arrow right at you right now.

[30 : 02] The king had a personal interest. How do you respond? How are you going to respond to all the need around you? How are you going to respond to your family that doesn't know Jesus?

How are you going to respond to your neighbors? How are you going to respond to a lost world? How are you going to respond to the children that come here to hear the gospel in your Sunday school class on a Sunday morning? How are you going to take the ministry God gave you?

I mean, we even get factional about our ministry. Song people mad at sound, people sound, people mad at video, people video, people mad at preachers, deacons mad at Sunday school teachers. None of this is really happening. I'm just using an illustration.

But all this junk, thank the Lord it's not, but all this junk goes on amongst churches all the time. But when we get a hold of this, it's not about my preaching, it's about Jesus. Then God can do a work.

There was an enemy, a rival. Look at Nehemiah chapter 2 and verse 10. Nehemiah chapter 2 and verse 10. When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was a man sent to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.

[31 : 08] Did you know when they decided that they would go and do something in Jerusalem, there was a couple of guys over that were like, we do not want anything good to happen to those people. We don't want God's name lifted up.

We don't want the city walls built back up. We don't want any of this stuff to happen. We don't like it. You understand me? We don't like it. They hated God. You do realize that if you decide to serve God, you will put yourselves in the crosshairs of the devil himself.

He'll hate you. I think it was Leonard Ravenhill that prayed for a young preacher and said, I pray God will know you and I pray the devil will too. He said, because if you ever get to do anything for God, the devil will know who you are.

He said, I hope you're doing something for God. So the rival woke up and said, bless God, you are not coming to Jerusalem. We're going to do everything I can. And from now to the rest of the story, there's going to be a fight between these guys.

They're going to try to stop everything Nehemiah does. Can I tell you there's somebody that's against you this morning? It's the devil. He does not want you to live a holy life. He does not want you to honor God.

[32 : 15] But can I just go ahead and tell you the honest truth? The biggest enemy of the work of God has isn't even the devil. It's me. It's myself. You know, the devil doesn't have to do a lot to convince me I want to keep my money.

The devil doesn't have to do a lot to convince me I'm embarrassed to witness about Jesus. The devil doesn't have to do much to make me realize I don't want my children going overseas to be a missionary.

The devil doesn't have to really help me too much. I'm already on his team. I'll tell you who the biggest enemy Austin Gardner has in doing the ministry.

It's Austin Gardner. Because I'm lazy. Because I want the easy path. Because I want people to like me.

And so Sanballat and Tobiah they're rising up against old Nehemiah and this story and it's just men against men but I know this we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers we wrestle against Satan and what he's doing.

[33 : 23] He's trying to hinder us. Nobody has to convince me to be selfish. I just like being that way. You mad?

Isn't it the truth? Why can't we get a church going I don't like the way they talked about me. Well of course you don't. I mean we're we didn't even need the devil to come help get these little fights going did we?

We can do that without him. I think sometimes we won't blame the devil on stuff and he's back over saying I didn't have to help y'all y'all was already doing good enough on y'all. What were they going to do?

What was the relief? What was the welfare of the people? They were going to go rebuild the wall. They were going to set up the security around the city. They were going to make a difference that could affect that city and bring the name of God back up.

Now this morning as a church we have a massive job and it's not really memorizing Bible or reading Bible. One of the first things we have to do is we need to get saved and get people saved.

[34 : 34] I mean we are not here to form a club of people that claim to believe in Jesus where we can go out to eat and where we can have long talks and where we can enjoy each other's company where we can go up to a camp and freeze to death during the night while some cowards scurry home in their cars like Sam Paxson did.

I don't know who came with him. Amen. And the rest of you that aren't going to say anything about it you didn't even show. I was a coward but you didn't even show. Say amen. At the end of the little session up there at the camp and everybody sitting in the campfire I said alright help me find my chairs.

People said what's going on? I said well I'll see you tomorrow. I did have trouble almost running out of gas coming home so I thought the Lord was going to leave me parking freezing on the side of the road but he didn't.

We're here to get people saved people. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5 18 and all things are of God who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.

He's the one that saved us. He's the one that made us right but then he gave us the ministry of reconciliation. He gave us the ministry of helping people that the devil is beaten up to wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself not imputing their trespasses unto them and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

[35 : 54] God wants us to tell people about Jesus. He wants us to tell our families. He wants us to tell our friends. He wants us to tell people where we work. He wants us to tell people we don't know.

He wants us to tell Alpharetta. He wants us to tell the whole county. He wants us to tell the state. He wants the world to know. That's what he made us for. Somebody in this room ought to be sitting over somewhere saying this is exactly what God wants.

So I've got to be the one that picks up the ball. Some man in this room some woman in this room ought to say we're not doing enough of this and I'm not blaming anybody. I'm going to confess it.

I'm going to get it right. I'm going to see to it that this ministry goes forward. I'm going to get under the burden. That's what's going on in the story that we have here. They need to hear whosoever shall call unto the name of the Lord shall be saved but how can they call if they have not heard?

They've got to hear. We have got to go tell them. We know it's what God wants. God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. Yet I don't do enough witnessing.

[37 : 04] I don't participate enough. I don't seem to care enough. We want God to do something. I must take more personal responsibility. Nehemiah, why are you sad?

Well, I'm sad because the name of my God. You live in a country today where let's just be honest. God is mocked everywhere we go.

And he's mocked because we live in sin. Because we don't live what we teach and preach. Because we are hypocrites. And the name of God is mocked.

The name of God is mocked because it's not real to us. Could it be that this morning we should be sad and say, boy, Nehemiah's right.

I haven't had a broken heart for souls. I haven't had a broken heart for the things of God. I have said the church ought to and others ought to. I haven't looked in the mirror. I haven't thought about what I ought to do.

[38 : 06] Could that be true? Could that be true? Is there somebody in this room that would say, man, give an invitation because I need to stand up and say I'm the man and I'll do something.

Could it be? Maybe you're here and you've never been saved. You don't know if you die today you go to heaven. But you could know you could be saved today. Your sins could be forgiven.

You could have new life. I want you to be saved. We want you to be saved.